

[By Bob Kinzel, Vermont Public Radio](#)

(Host) All 3 members of Vermont's Congressional delegation say they have serious reservations about President Obama's plan to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan.

And it's likely that they'll oppose efforts to provide funds for the expansion.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports.

(Kinzel) Senator Patrick Leahy says he opposes the plan because he sees no compelling reason, at this time, to increase U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan:

(Leahy) "You have to ask a real question why are we there if we're not there to catch Osama bin laden because he's escaped, others have said well we're there to stop the heroin trade the price of heroin hasn't go up it's actually gone down since we've been there so that hasn't worked others will say we want to bring democracy to Afghanistan the last election of Hamid Karzai made a mockery of democracy he stole the election."

(Kinzel) And Leahy says it's clear that the United States cannot succeed in Afghanistan without the help of the Afghan people:

(Leahy) "They're going to have to have their own military willing to step up and be able to take over we cannot as so long as we're the ones who seem to be carrying all of the burden why should they."

(Kinzel) Senator Bernie Sanders says the situation in Afghanistan needs an international response and he's concerned that he doesn't see that effort taking place:

(Sanders) "I don't want to see this be another Iraq where it becomes an American war it has got to be we need to have the international cooperation there's a piece in the paper that all the people of Europe said hey great speech Obama did really good are you going to be sending more troops no I don't think we will good job President Obama you keep sending American troops and have the American taxpayers pay for it we think you're doing great but not us."

(Kinzel) And Sanders questions if Afghan officials are capable of stepping up to the challenges facing their country:

(Sanders) "There are real questions whether the government of Afghanistan widely regarded as corrupt and perhaps illegal nobody knows who won the election whether that government is capable of doing what has to be done to build the military and the police force."

(Kinzel) Congressman Peter Welch says he believes it's important for the United States to fight the forces of al-qaeda but he says it's critical to understand that these forces are spread throughout the world:

(Welch) "They're not a nation state they're disbursed they're in Afghanistan to some extent 500 or so in Pakistan they're in other countries like Yemen and Somalia we have a decentralized threat and we are having a policy that basically depends on an occupation military force and nation building and that's what I think is a mistake in the long run in Afghanistan."

(Kinzel) And Welch says it's a mistake to spend 30 billion dollars a year on this plan when there are huge budget needs in this country:

(Welch) "Frankly I think we should be doing much more nation building and job creating at home not in Afghanistan."

(Kinzel) Welch says he hopes backers of the President's policy will identify a specific funding source to pay for the plan.

For VPR News I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.